

House File 2278 - Introduced

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A BILL FOR

1 An Act requiring the department of management to establish and
2 operate a searchable internet site containing revenue and
3 expenditure data of school districts.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **8G.20 Intent — findings.**

2 The general assembly finds that taxpayers should be able to
3 easily access the details on how school districts are spending
4 their tax dollars and other school revenues and the performance
5 results achieved for those expenditures. Therefore, it is the
6 intent of the general assembly to direct the department of
7 management to create and maintain a searchable budget database
8 and internet site detailing where school district tax dollars
9 and other funds are expended, the purposes for which tax
10 dollars and other funds are expended, and the results achieved
11 for all taxpayer investments in school districts.

12 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **8G.21 Short title.**

13 This subchapter shall be known as and may be cited as the
14 *"School District Transparency Act"*.

15 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **8G.22 Definitions.**

16 As used in this subchapter, unless the context otherwise
17 requires:

18 1. *"Director"* means the director of the department of
19 management.

20 2. *a. "Entity" or "recipients"* means any of the following:

21 (1) A corporation.

22 (2) An association.

23 (3) An employee union.

24 (4) A limited liability company.

25 (5) A limited liability partnership.

26 (6) Any other legal business entity, including nonprofit
27 entities.

28 (7) A grant recipient.

29 (8) A contractor.

30 (9) A county, city, school district, or other local
31 government entity.

32 *b. "Entity" or "recipients"* does not include an individual
33 student of the school district.

34 3. *"Funding action or expenditure"* includes details on the
35 type of spending that is provided including but not limited

1 to expenditures from a fund of the school district, grants,
2 contracts, and appropriations. Where possible, an electronic
3 link to the actual grants or contracts shall be provided. An
4 electronic link shall be in a format that is a searchable
5 document.

6 4. "*Funding source*" means the state account or fund from
7 which the expenditure is appropriated. "*Funding source*" does
8 not include federal moneys or grants received by a school
9 district.

10 5. "*Searchable internet site*" means an internet site
11 that allows the public at no cost to search and compile the
12 information identified in section 8G.23 and that provides such
13 information in a format capable of being downloaded from the
14 site to personal computers.

15 6. "*State audit or report*" shall include any audit or report
16 issued by the auditor of state, department of management,
17 legislative services agency, legislative committee, or
18 executive body relating to the entity or recipient of school
19 district funds, the program or activity, or the school
20 district.

21 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 8G.23 **Searchable school district**
22 **budget database internet site created.**

23 1. By January 1, 2020, the director shall develop and make
24 publicly available a database internet site for searching,
25 accessing, and processing data, including the data required
26 in this section, for the most recent school budget year.
27 The internet site shall be developed in such a way that the
28 information can be provided to other software applications,
29 including internet software applications, in a manner and
30 format that allows such software applications to access and
31 interpret the data using the internal programming of the
32 software applications. In gathering or receiving information
33 from school districts, the director shall make a good-faith
34 effort to minimize the costs and disruptions to other school
35 districts and their computer systems of providing such

1 information

2 2. The searchable internet site developed pursuant to this
3 section shall allow the public at no cost to search and compile
4 the information provided pursuant to this subsection. Each
5 school district shall provide the following:

6 a. Name of the entity or recipient of school district funds.

7 b. Amount of school district funds expended.

8 c. Funding or expending school district.

9 d. Funding source.

10 e. Budget program or activity of the expenditure.

11 f. Descriptive purpose for the funding action or
12 expenditure.

13 g. Expected performance outcome for the funding action or
14 expenditure, to the extent that such information is available
15 and can be provided.

16 h. Past performance outcomes achieved for the funding
17 action or expenditure, to the extent that such information is
18 available and can be provided.

19 i. State audit or report relating to the entity or recipient
20 of school district funds or the budget program or activity or
21 agency.

22 j. Any other relevant information specified by the director.

23 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. 8G.24 Internet site updates.

24 1. Effective July 1, 2020, the internet site shall be
25 updated regularly as new data and information become available,
26 but shall be updated no less frequently than quarterly
27 thereafter as new data becomes available. All school districts
28 shall provide to the director data that is required to be
29 included on the internet site not later than sixty days
30 following the close of each quarter during the school budget
31 year. The director shall provide guidance to school districts
32 to ensure compliance with this section.

33 2. By January 1, 2021, the director shall add data for
34 the previous school budget years to the internet site. Data
35 for previous school budget years may be added as it becomes

1 available and as time permits. The director shall ensure that
2 all data added to the internet site remains accessible to the
3 public for a minimum of ten years.

4 Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. **8G.25 Noncompliance.**

5 The director shall not be considered in compliance with this
6 subchapter if the data required for the internet site is not
7 available in a searchable manner and capable of being compiled
8 or if the public is redirected to other government internet
9 sites unless each of those sites displays information from all
10 school districts and each category of information required can
11 be searched electronically by field in a single search.

12 Sec. 7. STATE MANDATE FUNDING SPECIFIED. In accordance
13 with section 25B.2, subsection 3, the state cost of requiring
14 compliance with any state mandate included in this Act shall
15 be paid by a school district from state school foundation aid
16 received by the school district under section 257.16. This
17 specification of the payment of the state cost shall be deemed
18 to meet all of the state funding-related requirements of
19 section 25B.2, subsection 3, and no additional state funding
20 shall be necessary for the full implementation of this Act
21 by and enforcement of this Act against all affected school
22 districts.

23 EXPLANATION

24 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
25 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

26 This bill establishes legislative findings that taxpayers
27 should be able to easily access the details on how school
28 districts are spending their tax dollars and other school
29 revenues and the performance results achieved for those
30 expenditures. Additionally, the bill provides that it is the
31 intent of the general assembly to direct the department of
32 management to create and maintain a searchable budget database
33 and internet site detailing where school district tax dollars
34 and other funds are expended, the purposes for which tax
35 dollars and other funds are expended, and the results achieved

1 for all taxpayer investments in school districts.

2 Under the bill, by January 1, 2020, the director of the
3 department of management shall develop and make publicly
4 available a database internet site for searching, accessing,
5 and processing data, including the data required in the bill,
6 for the most recent school budget year. The internet site is
7 required to be developed in such a way that the information can
8 be provided to other software applications, including internet
9 software applications, in a manner and format that allows such
10 software applications to access and interpret the data using
11 the internal programming of the software applications. The
12 searchable internet site developed pursuant to the bill is
13 required to allow the public at no cost to search and compile
14 such information. Each school district shall provide the
15 following to the department of management: (1) the name of the
16 entity or recipient of school district funds; (2) the amount of
17 school district funds expended; (3) the funding or expending
18 school district; (4) the funding source; (5) the budget
19 program or activity of the expenditure; (6) the descriptive
20 purpose for the funding action or expenditure; (7) the expected
21 performance outcome for the funding action or expenditure; (8)
22 the past performance outcomes achieved for the funding action
23 or expenditure; (9) the state audit or report relating to the
24 entity or recipient of school district funds or the budget
25 program or activity or agency; and (10) any other relevant
26 information specified by the director of the department of
27 management.

28 Effective July 1, 2020, the bill requires the internet
29 site to be updated regularly as new data and information
30 become available, but shall be updated no less frequently than
31 quarterly thereafter as new data becomes available. All school
32 districts are required provide to the director data that is
33 required to be included on the internet site not later than
34 60 days following the close of each quarter during the school
35 budget year. The bill requires the director to ensure that all

1 data added to the internet site remain accessible to the public
2 for a minimum of 10 years. The bill also establishes criteria
3 to determine the director of the department of management's
4 compliance with the bill.

5 The bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code
6 section 25B.3. The bill requires that the state cost of
7 any state mandate included in the bill be paid by a school
8 district from state school foundation aid received by the
9 school district under Code section 257.16. The specification
10 is deemed to constitute state compliance with any state mandate
11 funding-related requirements of Code section 25B.2. The
12 inclusion of this specification is intended to reinstate the
13 requirement of political subdivisions to comply with any state
14 mandates included in the bill.